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## Some Less Known Dialects Of 'Kohistan'

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'Kohistan' literally means a 'mountainous region' and, as such, more than one areas in Pakistan are known by this general name of 'Kohistan'. The hilly tract extending from Karachi northward up to Sehwan is called 'Kohistan' by the people of Sind. Again the mountainous region covering the western part of the Hazara district extending northwards along the Indus as well as westwards across Swat towards Dir and Chitral is all 'Kohistan'. Of this area, the region extending along the Indus is called the 'Indus Kohistan', while the country around the Upper Swat Valley of Kalam may conveniently be called as 'Swat Kohistan'. In this paper I will refer to the dialects of 'Swat Kohistan', which are comparatively less known among the dialects of Kohistan.

The writer does not claim an intimate knowledge of the dialects of 'Swat Kohistan', but by this introductory paper proposes to invite attention of our learned scholars to the great need of studying the languages of this country. Arabic and Persian, being the repositories of the common cultural heritage of Pakistan, would continue to be studied by the Pakistani scholars. But the languages spoken by our own people, being the primary media for expressing their thoughts and feelings, provide the basis for our rich cultural variety and the very foundation of our national literature. Of these languages, the less known dialects need our special attention because of their philological and anthropological importance and also because of their importance in the local folklore and literature.

### Literary Importance

The speeches of Kohistan are important both from philological as well as literary point of view. If some local scholar

undertakes to collect folk poems composed in these tongues, his efforts will be amply rewarded. The early romance of Amīn Malik of Kishtkār with Khush Begum and the love poems composed by Amīn Malik seem to have started almost a chain reaction through Kohistan and, since then, a number of actual love stories have provided interesting topics for verbal tales as well as inspiring themes for poetry. Indeed, Swat Kohistan could as well be described as the 'land of lovers', and almost every lover was a poet in the bargain. I will quote some verses from *Tirwali* and *Kalāmī* to illustrate the poetic genius of these mountain bards, which is so realistic and true to life.

(a) *Verses from Tirwali*: Poet Lal yarned to meet his lady love 'Parvāsh', cried for her, and traversed long jungle tracks to seek the blessings of the Saint Pir Baba at Buner, but without any results. Says he in one of his poems:

میں آہن کے ڈاجو کے سود دیکھ خلیج  
نیز جیل میں جھنڈو ہوا ہا بد بردار

I made a long robe for myself to strut about in it  
(intoxicated with love)  
It was all torn to pieces in bushes, yet I could n't  
meet Parvāsh.

(b) *Verses from Kalāmī*: About the nature of love, poet Dādor Shān says:

دیوا شخانے کے وزیرا نہ  
مئے آج دین ملے نہ لیرا

Other lovers rather got it (love) cheap  
But I can't even see my friend although I pay the price.

The same poet describes how his beloved is being strictly guarded. Even the door of the house is being kept locked by the mechanism of striking fast a nail from outside the door.

درویش مالک نو کورتہ لہ چھورن ہار کے  
مشیویدے میں لے سترے بنے تا

He strikes the nail from outside the door to bar exit:  
The poor rival has kept my beloved safe from me.

### *The Less Known Kohistānī Dialects*

The northern region of Pakistan extending over 'Gilgit and Kashmir, the Indus and Swat Kohistāns, Chitral and Kafiristan' has been known throughout the long past as 'Dardistan', and hence the languages spoken in this extensive region were called by the general name of 'Dardic Languages' when they were studied for the first time under the *Linguistic Survey of India* directed by G. A. Grierson during the first quarter of this century. Grierson classified these 'Dardic' languages into three main groups, viz. the 'Kāfir', the *Kho-wār*, and the *Dard*. According to this classification *Shina* (the language of Gilgit), *Kashmiri* and *Kohistānī* form the Dard Group.<sup>1</sup> 'Kohistānī' has been described as "the original language of the Indus and Swat Kohistan" which is now divided into "several dialects". In the Swat Kohistan it is "now spoken only by Pashū".<sup>2</sup> Of its "several dialects" only *Garwī*, *Torwali*, *Chilis*, and *Maingān* have been mentioned and described in the Survey (vol. VIII, Part-II).

Beside the above four main dialects, the remaining Kohistānī dialects have not been studied so far. Here is a challenge to the students of philology and linguistics in our country. These 'several' Kohistānī speeches present a kaleidoscopic pattern so far as their geographical distribution is concerned. Although some of the contiguous dialects are mutually intelligible to their neighbouring speakers, it appears as if due to physical or social barriers from the time of their early settlements, the people of each isolated valley or a group of contiguous valleys came to preserve and develop the peculiarities of their own distinct tongues.

Of these 'several' less known dialects, the present writer

<sup>1</sup> *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. III, part. II, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

attempted to study particularly the *Gujro*, and also became partly acquainted with *Kalāmī*. The geographical position of these two and some other dialects which are distributed along the Upper Swat Valley is being briefly described here. It may, however, be pointed that *Pashm* is the *lingua franca* of Swat Kohistan.

- (1) *Turwāhī*. The area of Turwāhī begins from the town of Madāin (Swat State), extending northward on both sides of the Swat river to midway between Mankhīl village and the small Isret river which falls into the Swat river on the right hand side. Thus, starting from Madāin, the town of Bahraīn and many other villages such as Kēdam, Garthai, Cham, Kala-Lai and Mankhīl as well as the adjacent neighbourhoods on both sides of the Swat river speak *Turwāhī*.
- (2) *Gujro*. *Gujro* is the language of the Pishmāl Valley which is sandwiched between the Isret and the Keran Dukh—the two small tributaries of the Swat river on the right hand side. Pishmāl valley is almost entirely inhabited by the Gujars who speak *Gujro*. Gujars scattered elsewhere on the mountain slopes flanking the Swat river, also speak *Gujro*, but the Pishmāl valley is the home area of *Gujro*.
- (3) *Kālāmī*. Kālāmī valley which is the heart of Kohistan, is the main area of the Kālāmī language. It is also spoken, along with Pashm on the left hand side of the Swat river—opposite to the Pishmāl valley.
- (4) *Thal-Lamī*. This language takes its name from Thal which is the main town of the Dir State. It is also known as Dir-wālī. It is spoken along the western part of 'Swat-Kohistan'.
- (5) *Khūndia*. It is the language of the Eastern part of 'Swat-Kohistan'. The Baeten mountain divides the *Khūndia* speaking population from the Kishkari area.

### Philological Importance

In absence of any systematic studies subsequent to the completion of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, conclusions arrived at by Grierson, regarding the nature and origin, philology and grammar of these Dardic languages and dialects, are of basic

importance for any further study of the subject. Grierson made it clear that 'Dardic' was only a general name which was being extended, for the sake of convenience, to all the *Aryan* languages spoken in the region of Dardistan.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of philological evidence, Grierson pointed that there was an unmistakable philological link between Sindhi, Lahnda and the Dardic languages.<sup>2</sup> This conclusion of Grierson has hardly been modified or advanced by later research. It is necessary that we may explore further the nature of this philological link, mainly to determine whether *Sindhi* and *Lahnda* are derived from Sanskrit or they have developed along with the Dardic languages, independently as a distinct '*Indus Valley Group*'.

Grierson supported his view regarding an early philological link between Sindhi and Lahnda on the one hand the Dardic languages on the other, by pointing out their common characteristics of retaining 'r' in the past-tense and 'r' in the past-participle. For instance, from the verb 'to drink' the past tense in Sindhi will be *piro* (he drank), and in Lahnda (as well as in Panjabi which is influenced by Lahnda) it will be *piia*. Some other examples in Sindhi are *wario* (he got), *sario* (he became satisfied), *pario* (he made up the differences or he was entrusted to) etc. Similar examples in Lahnda and Panjabi are *sia* (he sew), *kia* (he did) etc. It may also be pointed that in the *Gujro* dialect of Pishmāl valley, we find the same 'r' preserved in past tense. For instance, from the verb *di-ana* or *di-na* (to give), past-tense will be *di-ih*. Now the one typical peculiarity of Dardic is that the letter 'r' when it comes between two vowels is not elided, but is kept without change. In all the Indo-Aryan languages and Indian Prakrits such a 'r' first became 'd' and then disappeared. For example in Hindi-Urdu, we have these past tenses as *piya* (he drank), *kia* (he did) etc. Again, the past-participle in the Dardic languages, e. g. in the *Maiyān* dialect of Kohistan and also occasionally in *Shina* language of Gilgit, retains 'r'. Thus in *Maiyān*, past-participle

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 139-40.

from the verb '*ku'*' (strike) will be '*ku'-ag-il'*' (struck). In Sindhi also we find every past-participle ending invariably in *il* e.g. *pi-* (drunk), *ka-yal* (done), *ma-iy-al* (struck or killed) etc. Although this '*i*' exists in the outer Indo-Aryan languages "we do not find anything like this in the inner sub-branch of the Indo-Aryan languages".<sup>1</sup>

Apart from these typical philological similarities pointed out by Grierson, we find some very close linguistic similarities between Sindhi and some of these Dardic dialects of 'Swat Kohistan'. For instance, there is a striking resemblance between some prepositions of Sindhi and Turvati. In Turvati, we have '*in chi*' (تو چی) which in old Sindhi is *to ji* (تو جی) meaning 'yours'. In Turvati, we will say '*Pir Baba gay*' (پیر بابا گئے) which in Sindhi will be '*Pir Baba Khay*' (پیر بابا کھے), meaning 'to Pir Baba' (پیر بابا کو).

Between Sindhi and Gujro, there is surprisingly such a close resemblance both in terminology and sentence structure that it appears as if Gujro is just another dialect of Sindhi. The following common characteristics are typical :—

(a) Both in Sindhi and Gujro, infinitives end in *n* or *m* and are followed by small vowels but not by a long vowel as we have in Hindi or Urdu.

English	Sindhi	Gujro	Urdu
To do	ka-ra-nnu (کَرَنُ)	ka-ra-na (کَرَن)	karṇā (کَرنا)
To drink	pi-ya-nnu (پِیَنُ)	pi-na (پِیَن)	piṇā (پینا)
To give	di-ya-nnu (دِیَنُ)	di-na, or di-a-na (دِیَن, دِیَن)	denā (دینا)

(b) Both in Sindhi and Gujro, words signifying masculine gender end in *o* (و), while those denoting feminine gender end in *ee* (ی).

English	Sindhi	Gujro
To sit	we-tha-nnu (وِثَنُ)	be-sa-na (بِیَسَن)
a horse	ghorro (گھوڑو)	ghorro (گھوڑو)
a mare	ghorree (گھوڑی)	ghorree (گھوڑی)
a dog	kuto (کُتو)	kuto (کُتو)
a bitch	kutee (کُتی)	kutee (کُتی)
a he-cat	bilo (بِلو)	bilo (بِلو)
a she-cat	bilee (بِلی)	bilee (بِلی)
a rupee	rupayo (رُپَیو)	rupayo (رُپَیو)
a roof	koitho (کوِٹھو)	koitho (کوِٹھو)
a thick eye-brow	bhiroonto (بِھِرُونٹو)	bhiroonto (بِھِرُونٹو)
the inside of the house	dero (دِیرو)	dero (دِیرو)

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

a person	janno	juno
	(جَنُو)	(جَنُو)
a cot	manjo	manjo
	(منجُو)	(منجُو)

(c) There is also a close resemblance between the names of the numerals. It is particularly noteworthy that both Sindhi and Gujro have retained 'r' (ر) in *sorahi* (sixteen) which has changed into 'l' in other languages (e.g. *solah* in Hindi-Urdu).

English	Sindhi	Gujro
one	liku	eka
	(هَک)	(ایک)
two	ba	do
	(بَہ)	(دو)
three	ire	trai
	(اِرے)	(تِرے)
four	char	char
	(چار)	(چار)
five	panja	panja
	(پنج)	(پنج)
six	chhahha/chha	chhaha
	(چھہ، چھہ)	(چھہ)
seven	sai-ta	sai-ta
	(سَیت)	(سَیت)
eight	aittha	aittha
	(اِٹھ)	(اِٹھ)

nine	navan/naon	naon
	(نَوَن، اِنَن)	(نَوَن)
ten	daha	daha
	(دَہ)	(دَہ)
eleven	yarahn	ya-r-ahn
	(یارَهَن)	(یارَهَن)
twelve	barahn	ba-r-ahn
	(بارَهَن)	(بارَهَن)
thirteen	te-rahin	te-rahin
	(تیرَهَن)	(تیرَهَن)
fourteen	cho-dhan	chao-dhan
	(چَوَدَهَن)	(چَوَدَهَن)
fifteen	pand-rahin	pand-rahin
	(پندرَهَن)	(پندرَهَن)
sixteen	sorahn	so-rahin
	(سورَهَن)	(سورَهَن)
seventeen	saf-rahin	saf-rahin
	(سَترَهَن)	(سَترَهَن)
eighteen	ar-frahn	aittha-frahn
	(اِرَفَهَن)	(اِٹھَفَهَن)
nineteen	connech	unech
	(اِرَہ-چَہ)	(اِرَہ-چَہ)
twenty	wuch	bech
	(وہ-چَہ)	(بہ-چَہ)

(d) Both Sindhi and Gujro have the same sentence structure and almost the same terminology. The following are the typical examples of some of the phrases and sentences in the two languages.

English	Sindhi	Gujro
good condition	changu bati	chango hal
	(چنگو حال)	(چنگو حال)
I saw	moon diho	men dittho
	(مُون ڏٺو)	(مِن ڏٺو)
I had seen you somewhere	moon tokhay kithhe diho ho	men to kithhe dittho thho
	(مُون توکھے کٿي ڏٺو هو)	(مِن توکھے ڏٺو تھو)
rupee is in the box	rupayo sandooq men piyo ahey	rupayō sandooq mfn piyō
	(روپو صندوق ۾ آهي)	(روپو صندوق ۾ آهي)
you may lie the string	dhago badhi jān	dhago badhe jan
	(دھاگو بندھڻاڻ)	(دھاگو بندھڻاڻ)

Beside the above similarities, there are many nouns which are common in the terminologies of Sindhi and Gujro (e.g. *meenu* (مُونُ) = rain; *kanthi* (کنڌي) in Sindhi and *kanth* (کنڌ) in Gujro = wall; *seem* (سِيَم) = a piece of pasture).

This very close philological relationship between Sindhi and the Dardic dialect Gujro suggests a common historical background of their development. Grierson does not recognise that

either Sindhi or Lahnda is derived from any Dardic language but admits the foreign Dardic influence on these languages.<sup>1</sup> It may be pointed out that in view of the philological and phonetic peculiarities of Sindhi, its geographical isolation, its distance from the Sanskrit orbit of influence, and the continuous subsection of the lower Indus Valley to the political influence and population migrations from the West rather than from the East, it is yet to be established whether Sindhi is derived directly and only from Sanskrit.<sup>2</sup> The distinct nature of Sindhi, Lahnda, and the Dardic languages (of Kashmir, Kohistan and Gilgit) rather suggest that they owe their origin to the common stock of Aryan tongues spoken at the time of early Aryan settlements all along the Indus Valley. It has already been accepted that *Palsachi*, the mother of the Dardic languages, "was a very ancient language, a sister, and not a daughter of the form of speech which ultimately developed as literary Sanskrit." Sanskrit developed later on after the Aryans had left behind their early settlements on the Indus, and migrated eastward and began a new phase of their settled life. There, from the common stock of the "Indus Valley Languages" of the Aryans, originated and developed Sanskrit which, influenced the *Indus Valley languages* (Sindhi, Lahnda, Kashmiri etc.) in later times, mainly through some form of Pali Prakrit. However despite this influence, these languages have preserved their early group-affinity and also their philological phonetic originality to the present times.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141, fn. 1

<sup>2</sup> This subject has been discussed in details by the writer in a monograph on "A Brief History of Sindhi Language", the *Tuljue-Larkana*, Hyderabad, 1962.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Grierson: *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. VIII, part-II, pp. 3-4.